

South Bascom Workshop #2 Summary

The second community workshop for the South Bascom Urban Village was held on September 30, 2013, at Sherman Oaks Community Center, with more than 90 community members participating. The input from the first meeting (held on October, 24th, 2012) helped inform the creation of draft concepts relating to urban design, land use, parks, public art, circulation, and streetscape. These draft concepts were presented to the community at this second meeting in order to receive further community comments prior to the development of the Draft Urban Village Plan document.

The workshop began with a welcome followed by background information of the Urban Village planning process and steps taken since the previous workshop. The speakers for the workshop included both City staff and the staff from MIG, the project's consultants. This introduction was followed by a PowerPoint presentation on the overall vision, issues and opportunities, urban design, land use, parks, public art, circulation, and streetscape.

Following this PowerPoint presentation, the group of 90+ community members was split up evenly into two groups for breakout sessions on the presented material. These breakout sessions were more question-and-answer in format and key slides from the presentation were blown up on posters to provide reference material. This breakout session portion of the workshop consisted of one group going into another room to discuss the draft urban design, land use and parks/art concepts, with the other group going to another room to discuss the draft circulation and streetscape concepts. After roughly 45 minutes of dialogue, the two groups switched to discuss the other topics.

After these two sessions took place, the workshop participants regrouped to for an overview of the key takeaways that came from these discussions. Below are the main points the community made about each of the topics:

Urban Design

- Attention must be paid to the height transition from new development along South Bascom to the adjacent existing residential
- Height allowances should be varied allow for a mix of shorter and taller buildings which would make for a visually appealing streetwall
- Design building massings with viewsheds, shadow mitigation, and privacy in mind
- Development should dedicate land in order to widen the sidewalks
- Consistent signage and tree planting to promote visual cohesion
- Create pedestrian walk-throughs in larger developments especially at Dick's Center to ensure better accessibility of the area by foot
- Ground floor parking should not be visible from the street and ideally wrapped with commercial space

Land Use

- Consider higher densities in the Institutional Gateway Character Area because higher intensity of uses can be more easily supported on properties next to the Medical Center or San Jose City College
- Based on input from the previous workshop, the community thought the land use for Dick's Center would be more residential in nature
- The minimum floor area ratio for commercial in mixed-use designated parcels may hinder development of these sites

Parks

- Ensure that increases in density also translate to increases in services and parks
- Native vegetation should exist wherever possible to decrease water use and provide identity
- Aside from more traditional parks, plazas, garden parks or community gardens also welcomed in the neighborhood
- There was strong neighborhood support for capping I-280 and building a park over it
- Plazas can also be used for community gatherings and farmers' markets
- Needs places of refuge from the busy, noisy street
- When tree planting, consider the neighborhood's fruit tree heritage
- The demographic profiles of the community should be considered on choosing the recreational programs and/or amenities

Public Art

- The Dick's Center sign should be preserved
- Parks should include a fountain or water feature
- Considering tying the neighborhood's history of drying sheds and canneries to public art and design
- Community interested in preserving a WWII siren that still exists along South Bascom

Circulation

- Midblock crossings are important due to lack of signalized crossings along corridor
- One participant suggested a pedestrian overpass over South Bascom to provide improved access to the South Bascom Community Center and Library. Another participant suggested a highly visible at grade pedestrian crossing at this location that included flashing lights to notify motorists of pedestrians
- New development should provide enough parking to prevent overflow into the adjacent neighborhoods
- Consider the parking capacity after the project is fully developed
- Valley Medical Center needs to provide more parking for its employees and San Jose City College will provide more parking for its students
- Safe, accessible routes to schools in the area are important
- Downing Avenue was identified as a heavily used route for students walking to Del Mar High School. An improved crosswalk was recommended at Downing Avenue's intersection with South Bascom. In addition, it was suggested that, with the redevelopment, pedestrian access should be allowed through the private property on the eastern side of this T intersection
- To further facilitate pedestrian access to Del Mar High School, an additional paseo/pedestrian connection was recommended through the private properties on the eastern side of the T intersection of Eisenhower Drive and South Bascom.
- Speeding was identified as an issue on Aram Drive
- Create better pedestrian and bike access to the VTA Light Rail station and the Los Gatos Creek Trail in general, and specifically improve the pedestrian and bicycle connection from the light rail station to South Bascom, potentially providing a connection through the Dick's Center property
- To improve bicycle access to San Jose Community College, Fruitdale Avenue should be reduced from four through vehicle lanes to two and bike lanes installed

- Provide a better connection for bicycles traveling north of I 280 on South Bascom in part by improving bicycle access on the South Bascom I/280 overpass
- Bike route should connect through Cambell and back to San Jose
- Consider restriping Moorpark adjacent to San Jose Community College to facilitate improved vehicle access to the College
- Improve and modify the intersection of South Bascom and Southwest Expressway to provide motor vehicles access at all legs of this intersection, thereby precluding the need for many motorists to use Stokes to access South Bascom.
- Del Mar Avenue was identified as a heavily used pedestrian corridor that is often used by the homeless people living in Los Gatos Creek. Participants said that safety and aesthetic improvements need to be explored to enhance this corridor. New development should not place its “back door” on Del Mar Avenue and should address the street with active uses to discourage nuisance activity and to make the corridor more attractive.

Streetscape

- Providing shade to pedestrians through street trees is vital
- Better pedestrian lighting is needed along South Bascom to make the street more walkable at night
- When sidewalks are widened, sidewalk cafes should be implemented to bring more life to the street
- Protected bike lanes along South Bascom would encourage convenient and safe biking in the area
- Planting canopy trees instead of columnar trees would reduce the wind tunnel effect
- Overall strong support was expressed for the concept of a road diet (lane reduction from 6 to 4 through lanes) along South Bascom Avenue. The primary concern expressed was that it would take too long to implement this concept.
- A couple of participants expressed support for the proposed retention of six through vehicle lanes adjacent to the Valley Medical Center to facilitate emergency vehicle access to the hospital
- Concern was expressed that a road diet on South Bascom would encourage spill over traffic on Thornton Way. Participants said that a road diet on South Bascom should also consider these spill over effects and include improvements on Thornton that would discourage cut through traffic and speeding